

Welcome to *Cuesheet*, a performance guide published by the Education Department of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. This *Cuesheet* is designed to help you enjoy the performance of Katie Couric's *The Brand New Kid*.

## What's in *Cuesheet*?

The Story, pages 2-4

FYI for Parents and  
Teachers, page 5

A Good Audience and  
Resources, page 6

# Katie Couric's The Brand New Kid

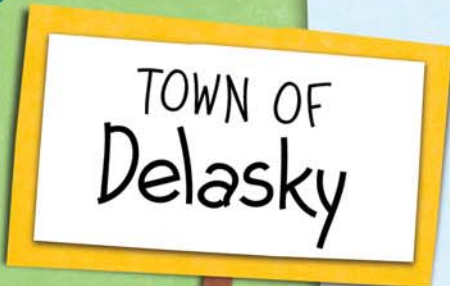
2ND  
GRADE  
MISS  
KINCAID

Directed by  
Nick Olcott

Books and Lyrics by  
Melanie Marnich

Music and Lyrics by  
Michael Friedman

# THE STORY



**W**hen Lazlo S. Gasky joins the second grade at Brookhaven

Elementary, his classmates notice that he is different in the way he looks, speaks, and acts. Some of the students tease him. The teasing causes many problems but leads the class to an important lesson.

## Main Characters:

**The New Kid**  
(7 years old)

Lazlo S. Gasky



**His Classmates**  
(7 years old)

Ellie McSnelly

Carrie O'Toole—Ellie's best friend

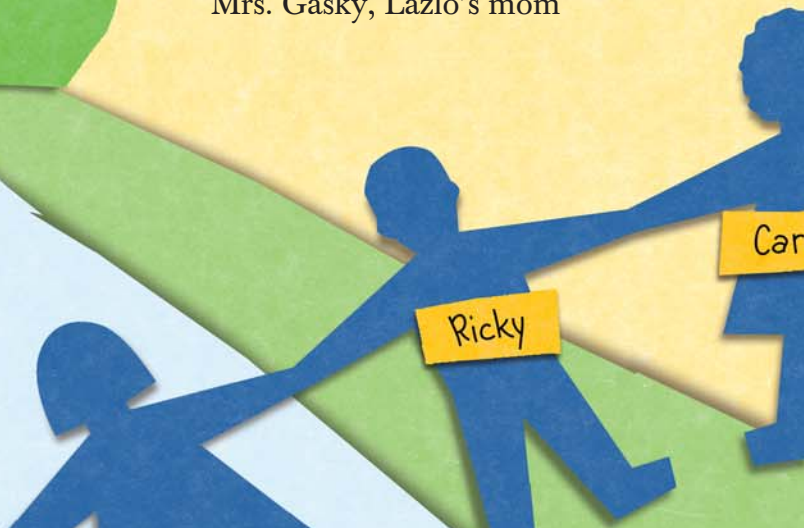
Ricky Jensen

Peter Barsinsky—Ricky's best friend

**The Grown-Ups**

Miss Kincaid, the teacher

Mrs. Gasky, Lazlo's mom



## The Very First Day of a Brand New School Year

In the town of Delasky, Miss Kincaid's class is starting second grade. Most students know each other. "We know each other's names, and we're all the same," they say.

Then, they notice the new student, Lazlo. He is not from Delasky. He's not even from the United States. He is from another country called Hungary.

Lazlo looks and sounds different from the other children. Some of them say he is strange. "I don't like the looks of this kid," says Ricky. He decides to tease and bully Lazlo every day. Lazlo feels like an outsider in his new class.



## We Can't Help Ourselves

Ellie knows that teasing Lazlo is wrong. "We should be nice to him, right?" she asks the others.

But Ricky and Peter say they can't stop themselves from being mean. "We gotta be brats today!"

## It's Rough Being the New Kid

Lazlo is unhappy at school. The teasing bothers him. No one will play with him.

"It's rough being the new kid," Lazlo tells his mother. She understands how he feels.



## I Feel Bad About Lazlo

Ellie wonders what it is like to be Lazlo. "What's it like in his shoes?"

Ellie wants to make Lazlo feel better, but she does not know how.

Lazlo wants to make friends with Ellie, but all the teasing has made him feel shy.





## Almost Friends

One night, Ellie and Lazlo dream about being friends.

The next day, Ellie asks Lazlo to play. They have fun playing chess and soccer. Ellie tells Lazlo, "Maybe you're *different*. But that's not bad."

When the other kids tease Ellie, she pretends not to like Lazlo.

Lazlo is sad again. Ellie is disappointed in herself. "I didn't stand up to those guys and I should have," she says.

## Lazlo Is Our Friend

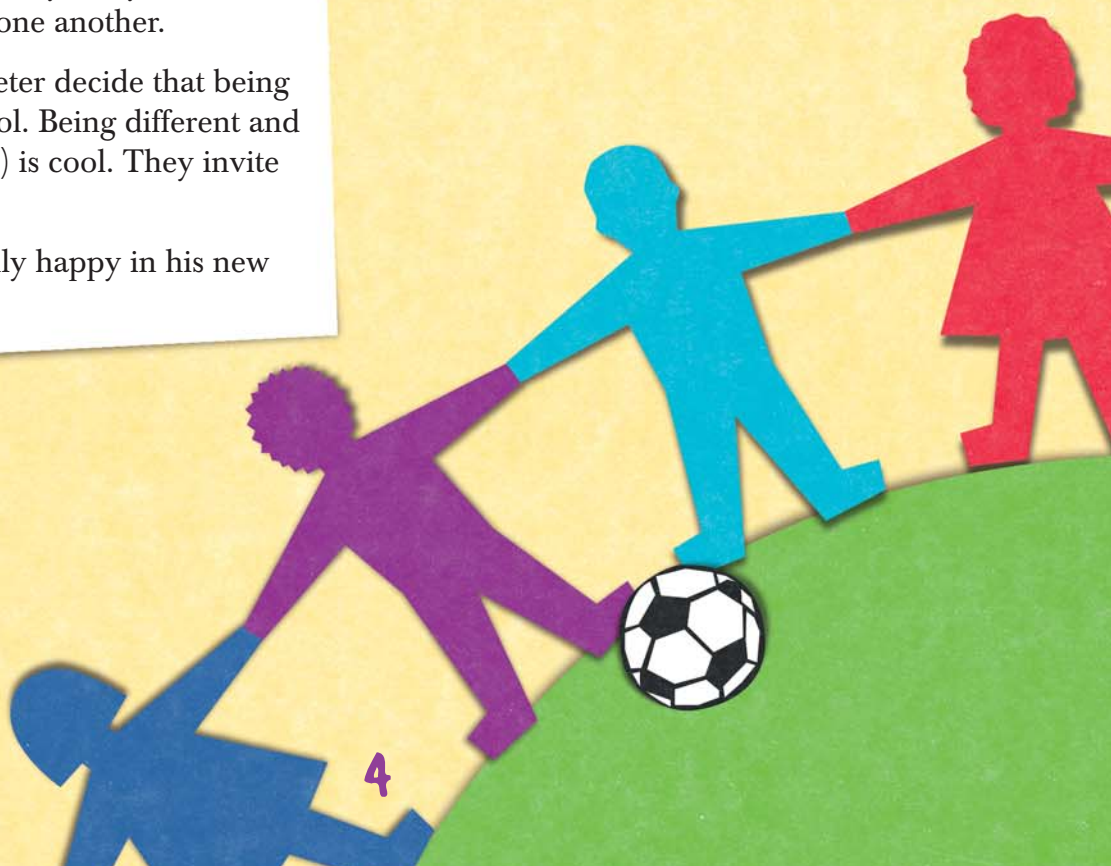
Ellie decides to speak up, "Lazlo is my friend." She says they are all different from one another.

Ricky and Peter decide that being mean is not cool. Being different and special (unique) is cool. They invite Lazlo to play.

Lazlo is finally happy in his new school.

## Look and Listen for...

- *The Brand New Kid* is a musical. Listen for how the words in the songs (lyrics) help tell the story.
- The story takes place in school, in the schoolyard, in town, and at Carrie's and Lazlo's homes. Watch how the scenery changes to show each new place.
- Ellie and Lazlo dream about being friends. Watch for clues that tell you the characters are dreaming.
- Actors pretend. Look for grown-up actors pretending to be children, a dog, a tree, and a bird. Also look for actors playing more than one role. Try to name two characters who were played by the same actor.



# FYI!

## for Teachers and Parents

This page contains activities to do before and after the performance.

### Compare and Contrast

Before the performance, read the book *The Brand New Kid* (see Resources, p. 6).

After the performance, ask how the book and the musical are the same and how they are different.

Explain that the book *The Brand New Kid* was written by Katie Couric, a star of TV news shows. She wrote the book to encourage children to accept each other's differences. She named the characters Ellie and Carrie after her daughters.

### Thinking About the Musical

Ricky and Peter say they can't stop themselves from teasing Lazlo, but they do have a choice. Ask:

- Ricky and Peter decided to be mean to Lazlo. Why did they do that?
- Why did Ricky and Peter finally stop being mean?
- When you have a choice to behave badly or behave nicely, how do you make the right choice? Imagine you saw Peter and Ricky teasing Lazlo. What could you do to help Lazlo?

Once Ellie defends Lazlo, things get better for him. Ask:

- Why was it so hard for Ellie to stand up to the other children?

During the musical, the main characters learn that everyone is different (unique) and that this is a good thing. Ask:

- What are some things that make your friends unique and special? What makes you unique and special?

### Imagine and Predict

Explain that in the musical, songs help tell the story. Before the performance, read the story on pages 2-4 and look at the song titles below. Predict what each song is about. After the performance, recall the songs and compare them with your predictions.

#### Song titles:

- “A Brand New Year”
- “The Brand New Kid”
- “We Can't Help Ourselves”
- “Sad Gaskys”
- “In His Shoes”
- “The Strudel Song”
- “The Soccer Song”
- “A Bad New Day”
- “A Brand New Day”
- “You Could Have Asked”

### Where's Hungary?

Lazlo Gasky comes from Hungary. Using a map or globe, help the children locate the United States and their state (or city, if they live in Washington, D.C.). Then help them find the Atlantic Ocean, Europe, and Hungary. Show them the countries that surround Hungary.

## Resources

### You may want to...

#### read:

*The Brand New Kid*, by Katie Couric. Illustrated by Marjorie Priceman. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

#### go online:

[www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/BrandNewKid](http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/BrandNewKid)

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### Katie Couric's *The Brand New Kid*

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# A Good Audience

At the , you are the .

This is different from ing  or a . You are in the same room with

the  . They do best when you 

and  carefully.   like it when

the  reacts to parts of the story

that are , , or . If you like

the , show it by  at the end.



audience



watch



movie



performers



sad



listen



TV



funny



clapping



performance



happy

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